

Hurry Up and Wait!

A one-act comedy

By Burton Bumgarner

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DEDICATION

To Cathy Bumgarner

STORY OF THE PLAY

Waiting in line? Waiting your turn? You don't have *time*! Here's a comedy in six scenes for those who are time-challenged. In the first scene a desperate woman has only 20 minutes to get to the airport to catch her flight and no matter what her beleaguered taxi driver says or does, they remain stuck in a traffic jam. In a different scene, things start to get physical at a restaurant when a couple with dinner reservations (and theatre tickets!) see others entering and being seated before them. In another scene, a jumpy hypochondriac is forced to wait in a doctor's office with other sick patients, including two obnoxious children. An ensemble of 4 men and 4 women can perform all the roles, or additional actors can be used. The play appeals to everyone who's wanted to scream when told "Patience is a virtue." So sit back, relax and enjoy the laughs.

SETTING

The play takes place on a bare stage with eight chairs, two end tables, a desk and a podium. Actors arrange the furniture for each scene. Furniture that is not being used may be moved upstage or offstage.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 4 w)

Directors may choose to use more actors (different actors for each scene). The actors' own first names may be used if desired.

**JASON
JOSEPH
ROB
MARCUS**

**REBECCA
LAURA
BRITTANY
ALANA**

SCENES

Scene 1: Traffic Jam

Cast: Brittany, Jason, Joseph

An impatient woman is stuck in a traffic jam with a New York cab driver and a freeloading passenger.

Scene 2: Party of Two

Cast: Entire Cast

A couple expecting a romantic dinner wait to be seated in an upscale restaurant. A contemptuous hostess and the other diners make for a difficult evening.

Scene 3: Testing

Cast: Jason, Rebecca, Joseph, Brittany

Students wish they had been better prepared as they await test scores in a language arts class.

Scene 4: Have We Got a Deal for You!

Cast: Marcus, Alana, Rob, Laura

a master car salesman meets his match with a couple who eventually wear him down.

Scene 5: The Doctor Is In

Cast: Entire Cast

A hypochondriac visits a doctor's office and has to wait in a room with sick and injured patients.

Scene 6: Tight Quarters

Cast: Entire Cast

A group of passengers unwittingly share a cab.

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Scene 1: Traffic Jam

(AT RISE: Four chairs in two rows are center. This is a taxi in New York City. JASON, the cab driver, enters and sits in the front left chair. He drives for several counts. BRITTANY yells offstage.)

BRITTANY: TAXI! TAXI!

(JASON stops. BRITTANY enters, with a suitcase, and runs to the back row of chairs. She sits.)

BRITTANY: *(Cont'd.)* To the airport! Fast!

JASON: *(Brooklyn accent.)* Which airport, lady?

BRITTANY: LaGuardia.

(JASON flips the meter and drives. BRITTANY takes out a cell phone and dials.)

BRITTANY: *(Cont'd.)* Laura? This is Brittany. After the seminar they wanted me to sign about a thousand of my books. It took forever for me to get out of there. I'm on my way to the airport. I should be back in the office this afternoon. *(Hangs up phone. To JASON.)* Can't you drive any faster?

JASON: Yeah. I can drive a lot faster.

BRITTANY: Then why are we moving so slowly?

JASON: Well, lady. There's this stuff in front of us called traffic.

BRITTANY: I can NOT miss my flight!

JASON: Hey! I'm doing the best I can here! I ain't got ... like ... control over the traffic flow!

BRITTANY: *(Looks downstage as if out the front windshield.)* Can't you pass that truck?

JASON: Not without driving on the sidewalk!

BRITTANY: Then drive on the sidewalk!

JASON: No offense, lady. But I ain't in that much of a hurry.

BRITTANY: Well, I am in that much of a hurry!

JASON: I ain't driving on no sidewalk!

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BRITTANY: Don't you know any short cuts? Cabbies always know short cuts.

JASON: I could turn onto 33rd Street and try the midtown tunnel.

BRITTANY: Do it! (*JASON turns the wheel. BRITTANY leans with the turn. She takes out her phone and dials.*) Hello? Marcus? ... Did you make the dinner arrangements with the crew from the west coast? ... Good. I'll be back this afternoon. It's going to be tight. Why don't you meet me at the airport and take me straight to the reception? ... (*Looks out the window. To JASON.*) Why are we stopped?

JASON: Traffic.

BRITTANY: I thought you said if we took the tunnel there wouldn't be any traffic.

JASON: I said we could try the tunnel. There's always traffic, lady.

BRITTANY: I have to catch this flight! My professional life depends on it!

JASON: When's ya flight?

BRITTANY: (*Looks at her watch.*) In twenty-five minutes.

JASON: I could maybe make midtown to the airport in twenty-five minutes at four in the morning. But it's noon, and there's a ton of traffic.

BRITTANY: (*On phone.*) I'll get back to you. (*Hangs up phone.*) Do you know who I am?

JASON: (*Looks back.*) You's a lady in a big hurry.

BRITTANY: I am a very important person!

JASON: (*Sarcastic.*) Whoopie.

BRITTANY: Look, buster! I have to make that flight! Get me to the airport now!

JASON: Lady, are ya familiar with the laws of physics? Cabs cannot pass through solid objects, such as cars and trucks! We are surrounded by cars and trucks! We have to wait until the cars and trucks move before we move! If we could rearrange our molecular structure, or if we could temporally enter another dimension, maybe we could pass through this pesky old traffic. But until such time as that becomes a possibility, we're stuck here!

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BRITTANY: Okay. That does it. You need incentive to help you decide on a restructuring plan. *(Reaches in her purse and produces cash.)* Here is a hundred dollars. Now, you get your cute little cab to the airport and you can have the money.

JASON: Ya ain't hearing what I'm saying here!

BRITTANY: Okay, two hundred. But that's my final offer.

JASON: It can't be done, lady!

BRITTANY: You drive a hard bargain. Three hundred. And that's it! The final offer!

JASON: NO!

BRITTANY: Four hundred!

JASON: I thought three hundred was ya final offer.

BRITTANY: I'm trying to work with you ... what's your name?

JASON: Jason.

BRITTANY: *(Offering her hand.)* Hi, Jason. I'm Brittany.

JASON: *(Shakes her hand.)* Pleased to meet ya ... maybe.

BRITTANY: I apologize if I seem a little harsh.

JASON: That's okay. Ya's gonna be late. That's all. Catch the next flight.

BRITTANY: How does seven hundred dollars sound? You get me to the airport in *(Looks at her watch.)* twenty-three minutes and I'll give you seven hundred dollars. And that IS my final offer.

JASON: No!

BRITTANY: Okay. Eight hundred.

JASON: Lady, ya's getting on my nerves!

BRITTANY: *(Points downstage.)* Look! The traffic's moving! Hurry! *(THEY lean back as JASON accelerates.)* Hurry, Jason! You can do it! You can get this cab to the airport! I'm so happy I could kiss you! *(JASON smiles.)* But I'm not going to. *(Jason frowns. Brittany sighs.)* This has been the worst trip I've made in years. No one wanted to cooperate. No one wanted to listen. Then they wanted to stand around and feel sorry for themselves.

JASON: So, what'd ya do in ya line of work?

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BRITTANY: I'm a motivational speaker. I inspire people to look beyond their everyday lives and reach their greatest potential. And I charge them a lot of money. I have my own company. It's called "You Can!" That's the motto of my speeches. YOU CAN find that perfect job. YOU CAN earn six figures. YOU CAN find that perfect spouse. You know, Jason. You should attend one of my seminars. Here you are, a lowly cabbie. Think what you could be if you had the right motivation.

JASON: Yeah. I could be a lowly cabbie with a big mouth.

(JASON puts on the brakes. THEY lean forward.)

BRITTANY: Why are we stopping?

JASON: We gotta pay the toll. It's five bucks.

BRITTANY: *(Hands HIM five dollars.)* Five dollars to drive through a tunnel! What a waste!

JASON: Ya's gonna give me eight hundred bucks to get ya to the airport and you're complaining over a five-dollar toll?

BRITTANY: Just get me to the other side of this tunnel before I strangle somebody. Namely you.

(JASON pretends to pay the toll. They move forward, then stop.)

BRITTANY: *(Cont'd.)* Why have we stopped?

JASON: I would tell ya it's the traffic, but I ain't wantin' go through no physics lesson again. I ain't so sure ya's cut out for that particular area of reasoning.

(JOSEPH enters left and crosses to the cab. He sits next to BRITTANY.)

JOSEPH: Hey. Mind if we share a cab?

BRITTANY: I certainly do! Get out of my cab!

JOSEPH: I'm just going into Queens. I'll split the fare.

End of Freeview

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